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29 December 1962
SC-11187/62

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

ATTENTION :

SUBJECT : Preliminary Evaluation of Situation
Summary on Developments in North Viet-
nam and Adjacent areas of China as of
27 December 1962.

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1. The information contained in this situation summary disclosed a large military installation at Ssumao located about 50 miles northwest of the Laos border. Over 700 barracks, storage buildings and miscellaneous facilities were noted. The breakdown of barracks and storage buildings was not indicated in the original report but the field has been queried for a more definitive interpretation of this installation. On the basis of what is now available it appears to be one of the largest concentrations of military buildings in one location ever noted in this type of information. If only half of the buildings noted--350--are barracks of the normal size 40 by 100 feet) they could conservatively house 35,000 troops. This would be over two full strength divisions or three understrength divisions. At the present time we credit one division--the 39th, subordinate to the 13th Army--at Ssumao.

2. Other relatively large military installations were reported at Mengla where 110 billets were noted and at Fohai north of the Burma border where about 200 barracks were reported. These large garrison areas indicate that the Chinese are preparing to station large numbers of troops along the Burma/Laotian border areas. Within the entire Kunming Military Region there are believed to be about 150,000 troops subordinate for the most part to the 13th and 14th Armies. The number of buildings reported at Ssumao, Mengla, and Fohai could accommodate more than half the total strength in the Kunming MR if they are standard size Chinese Communist barracks. While there is no indication of an imminent threat to Southeast Asia, these large installations should be considered a potential threat of possible Chinese Communist action against Southeast Asia.

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Mengtzu was reported in this situation summary. Apparently it has not been activated and remains in essentially the same condition as when observed in March.

4. The information reported on North Vietnam provided little of immediate value and nothing of unusual significance.

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